

Excerpts from:

## **Overall Recommendations from the High School Redesign Commission of South Carolina**

*Recommended by Terry Peterson*

South Carolina should mandate and fund alternative pathways to graduation to assist students who are behind academically and to foster individual progression through high school. Options should include the following:

- virtual high schools to enhance classroom learning, equalize opportunities among districts, and promote individual progression through school;
- credit-recovery labs provided during or after the school day to enable students who have fallen behind to complete courses and get back on track; and
- extended school day or extended school year programs to meet increasing expectations and goals and to ensure that students have opportunities to catch up, keep up, and get ahead with academic course work.

South Carolina should mandate and fund a system of dual credit, allowing a three-semester-hour college course to transfer as 1 full unit of Carnegie credit toward a high school diploma.

South Carolina should maximize the public investment in school construction and upkeep, accommodate the critical need to upgrade the work skills of the state's adults, and provide extended learning opportunities for students by designing or redesigning all secondary school buildings as community learning centers. These centers should be open in the afternoons and evenings for such activities as adult education classes, computer classes, beginning technical and two-year college courses, AP courses, ESL (English as a second language) programs, seminars, and foreign language courses. All future renovation and construction projects in South Carolina should require school designs to accommodate these needs. All existing secondary schools in communities with low educational levels should be transformed into community learning centers that coordinate their programs with nearby colleges and universities.

Professional development should be redesigned to provide additional time for the personal learning and collaboration that are essential to meeting individual student needs:

- The General Assembly should fund extended educator contracts to allow for collaboration among colleagues and to support ongoing professional development with an emphasis on delivering more rigorous content; creating more personalized instruction; and developing behaviors, knowledge, and skills

to inspire and motivate students.

- Educators should be given support and time to work in vertical teams to strengthen content, instruction, and linkages among middle schools, high schools, and postsecondary institutions.
- Middle and high schools rated unsatisfactory, below average, or average should have two full-time campus-based instructional coaches, one with experience in the school and one from outside the school.

All high school reform efforts should be directed toward improving the quality and quantity of interactions between students, teachers, and other school personnel and should therefore include the reorganization of large high schools into smaller learning communities and a reduction in the number of students that teachers are responsible for.